

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

In re U.S. Patent Application of )  
)  
Mark Robert WATKINS *et al.* )  
)  
Application Number: To be Assigned )  
)  
Filed Concurrently Herewith )  
)  
For: UTILIZATION OF UNUSED DISK SPACE ON )  
NETWORKED COMPUTERS )

Honorable Assistant Commissioner  
for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Sir:

Prior to an examination on the merits, please amend the above-captioned application as follows:

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please replace the below claims as follows:

1. (Amended.) A network of computers comprising:

a plurality of individual computer devices each having a non-volatile data storage device and each having means for communicating with at least one other one of said plurality of computers;

each said non-volatile data storage device being divided into a first data storage area reserved for use by the corresponding computer device, and a second data storage area reserved for backup storage of data contained in at least one said first data storage area of at least one other said non-volatile data storage device;

a data protection component for providing data protection for user data stored on each of the non-volatile data storage devices by storing the user data which is resident within the said first data storage area of each non-volatile data storage device, in one or a plurality of said second data storage areas of other said non-volatile data storage devices.

**IN THE ABSTRACT:**

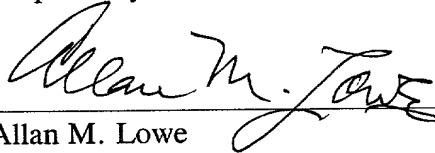
Please replace the Abstract of the Disclosure with the attached Abstract.

**REMARKS**

Applicant has amended claim 1 and the abstract to remove the reference numerals in them. For the convenience of the Examiner, Applicant is attaching a page of the claims and the abstract showing the changes made. No new matter has been added to the application as a result of this amendment.

Prompt and favorable action on the merits of this application is earnestly solicited. Kindly direct any inquiries to the undersigned at the below-listed address and telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Allan M. Lowe", is written over a horizontal line.

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A plurality of computers in a network each have a processor and a non-volatile data storage device such as a hard disk, a raid array, or the like. Each data storage device is divided into a first data storage area and a second data storage area. The first data storage area is reserved for use by at least one processor to which it is assigned, whereas the second data storage area is hidden from use by the file system of the computer, and is used to store replicated data of other ones of the plurality of computer entities. In the event of failure of any one of the data storage devices, data can be recovered from the second data storage areas of the other data storage devices.

1. A network of computers comprising:

each said non-volatile data storage device being divided into a first data storage area reserved for use by the corresponding computer device, and a second data storage area reserved for backup storage of data contained in at least one said first data storage area of at least one other said non-volatile data storage device;

20           2.           The network of computers as claimed in claim 1, comprising a set-up component for defining said data storage devices into a data protection group in which data from each of the plurality of data storage devices in the group are distributed amongst the plurality of data storage devices in the group.

a sizer configured for selecting a size of a first and a second data storage area of each of said plurality of non-volatile data storage devices.

30           4.       The network of computers as claimed in claim 1, further comprising  
a finder for finding a plurality of non volatile data storage devices.

AbstractUTILIZATION OF UNUSED DISK SPACE ON NETWORKED  
COMPUTERS

5 A plurality of computers in a network (503-505) each have a processor and  
a non-volatile data storage device (500-502) such as a hard disk, a raid array, or  
the like. Each data storage device is divided into a first data storage area (203-  
205) and a second data storage area (509-511). The first data storage area is  
reserved for use by at least one processor to which it is assigned, whereas the  
10 second data storage area is hidden from use by the file system of the computer,  
and is used to store replicated data of other ones of the plurality of computer  
entities. In the event of failure of any one of the data storage devices, data can  
be recovered from the second data storage areas of the other data storage  
15 devices.

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